

JIM DEMINT
SOUTH CAROLINA

DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

340 RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
(202) 224-6121
demint.senate.gov

United States Senate

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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

September 8, 2005

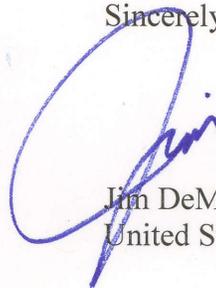
Dear Friends:

We have all been saddened to see the images of Hurricane Katrina's devastation. As you know, this storm created an area of destruction 90,000 square miles wide, roughly the size of Great Britain. Homes were leveled, bridges have crumbled, and hundreds of thousands of lives will forever be changed.

To help the families directly impacted by this storm, my staff has assembled a "Quick Reference Guide", so that you can quickly access the many types of federal assistance currently available. Please understand that this is only a snapshot of what is currently available at the time of this publication, new and more extensive services are being offered each and every day.

This is a critical moment of need for many American families devastated by this disaster; I hope this guide will help you in your efforts to get some sense of normalcy back in your lives. May God bless you and the United States of America.

Sincerely,



Jim DeMint
United States Senator

CHARLESTON
112 CUSTOMS HOUSE
200 EAST BAY STREET
CHARLESTON, SC 29401
(843) 727-4525

GREENVILLE
105 NORTH SPRING STREET
SUITE 109
GREENVILLE, SC 29601
(864) 233-5366

COLUMBIA
1901 MAIN STREET
SUITE 1475
COLUMBIA, SC 29201
(803) 771-6112

From the Office of U.S. Senator Jim DeMint



**Please note the following guide has been assembled from various agency web sites and information received over the telephone. This information and the benefits listed are subject to change. If you have any questions about this Guide, please contact our office at the numbers listed below.*

Quick Reference Guide – Table of Contents

Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (p. 4-7)

The FDIC covers federally regulated banks. This section is for Bank Customers in Areas Affected by Hurricane Katrina.

Agency Contact:

1-877-275-3342

Senator DeMint's Office Contacts:

(864)233-5366 Greenville, SC: Seth

(803)771-6112 Columbia, SC: Debbie

(843)727-4525 Charleston, SC: Joseph

Federal Emergency Management Administration (p. 8-11)

FEMA is the Federal Emergency Management Agency responsible for providing and coordinating emergency services in federally declared disaster areas.

Agency Contact:

1-800-621-FEMA (3362)

Senator DeMint's Office Contact:

(864)233-5366 Jeff

Health and Human Services (p. 12)

THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES is the US government's principal agency for protecting the health of all Americans and providing essential human services, especially for those who are least able to help themselves.

Agency Contact:

1-877-696-6775

Senator DeMint's Office Contacts:

(864)233-5366 Greenville, SC: Seth

(803)771-6112 Columbia, SC: Debbie

(843)727-4525 Charleston, SC: Joseph

Housing and Urban Development (p. 13-14)

HUD's mission is to increase homeownership, support community development and increase access to affordable housing free from discrimination.

Agency Contact (803)254-3886 Columbia, SC
(843)720-3970 Charleston, SC
(864)467-4250 Greenville, SC
Senator DeMint's Office Contact: (864)233-5366 Seth

Internal Revenue Service (p. 15-18)

US government agency responsible for tax collection and tax law enforcement

Agency Contact: 1-866-562-5227 (Katrina victims only)
Senator DeMint's Office Contact (864)233-5366 Kate

Medicare (p. 19-20)

Information on relief efforts for Medicare recipients

Agency Contact: 1-800-Medicare (633-4227)
Senator DeMint's Office Contact (803)771-6112 Debbie

Office of Personnel Management (p. 21-23)

Information for federal employees impacted by Katrina.

Agency Contact: 1-888-767-6738
Senator DeMint's Office Contacts: (864)233-5366 Greenville, SC: Seth
(803)771-6112 Columbia, SC: Debbie
(843)727-4525 Charleston, SC: Joseph

Passports (p. 24)

Information for citizens seeking passports

Agency Contact: 1-877-487-2778
Senator DeMint's Office Contacts: (864)233-5366 Greenville, SC: Melissa
(803)771-6112 Columbia, SC: Debbie
(843)727-4525 Charleston, SC: Joseph

Social Security Administration (p. 25)

Information on how to receive Social Security payments

Agency Contact: 1-800-772-1213
Senator DeMint's Office Contact: (864)233-5366 Melissa or Kate

Transportation Security Administration (p. 26-27)

Updates on Airport Closings, Transportation Issues

Agency Contact 1-866-289-9673
1-866-301-7214 (if you are employed by TSA)
Senator DeMint's Office Contacts: (864)233-5366 Greenville, SC: Seth
(803)771-6112 Columbia, SC: Debbie
(843)727-4525 Charleston, SC: Joseph

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (p. 28)

For those with questions about immigration requirements, forms...

Agency Contact:
Senator DeMint's Office Contacts: (864)233-5366 Deb OR
(843)727-4525 Joseph

United States Department of Agriculture (p. 29)

Agency Responsible for Agriculture related questions

Agency Contact: (864)814-2907 Greenville
(803)765-5163 Columbia
(843)727-4160 Charleston
Senator DeMint's Office Contacts: (864)233-5366 Greenville, SC: Seth
(803)771-6112 Columbia, SC: Debbie
(843)727-4525 Charleston, SC: Joseph

United States Department of Justice (p. 30)

Primary federal criminal investigation and enforcement agency

Agency Contact 1-888-544-5475 Missing Children
(202)514-2000
Senator DeMint's Office Contacts: (864)233-5366 Greenville, SC: Seth
(803)771-6112 Columbia, SC: Debbie
(843)727-4525 Charleston, SC: Joseph

United States Department of Labor (p. 31)

The US Department of Labor is charged with preparing the American workforce for new and better jobs.

Agency Contact: 1-866-4-USA-DOL (872-365)
Senator DeMint's Office Contacts: (864)233-5366 Greenville, SC: Seth
(803)771-6112 Columbia, SC: Debbie
(843)727-4525 Charleston, SC: Joseph

United States Department of State (p. 32-35)

For Information Contacting Foreign Nationals Possibly Affected by Hurricane Katrina

Agency Contact (202)647-4000
Senator DeMint's Office Contact: (803)771-6112 Debbie OR
(843)727-4525 Joseph

United States Postal Service (p. 36)

Agency responsible for transporting and delivering US Mail

Agency Contact (864)282-8421 Greenville
(803)733-4643 Columbia
(843)577-0690 Charleston
Senator DeMint's Office Contact: (864)233-5366 Seth

Veterans Administration (p.37-38)

The US Department of Veterans Affairs provides patient care and federal benefits to veterans and their dependents

Agency Contact: 1-800-956-0787
(803)695-6801 Dorn VA Medical Center
(803)776-4000 ext. 7322 Dorn VA
Senator DeMint's Office Contact: (864)233-5366 Jeff or Seth

Misc. Federal Agency Contact #'s (p.39)

Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation

Frequently Asked Questions for Bank Customers in Areas Affected by Hurricane Katrina

Q. The local banks are not cashing my checks or letting me withdraw money from teller stations, what can I do?

A. If you do not have an account relationship with the bank, it may be concerned about whether there are sufficient funds in your bank account. Ask the bank you are dealing with to call your bank to determine your account balance. We encourage you to work with your existing bank to provide the necessary information to the bank you are currently dealing with so that you may conduct your banking transactions. However, we do recognize that you may have no other alternative but to open a new banking account in the area in which you have relocated.

Q. My direct deposit is not showing up in my account, and I need money. Is there somebody who can help me clear this up with the bank?

A. Sometimes there are delays in the processing of transactions, including direct deposits, as banks activate back up plans. The banks will process the transactions once the plans are implemented. The delays should be rectified soon.

Please talk to your bank about the problem. You can also contact the individual or company that originated the deposit to see if they have any information about the status of your deposit.

Q. If my ATM card does not work, what should I do?

A. If your ATM card will not work, it is probably because your bank's verification system is not working. You may consider other options, such as cashing a check in the area where you are located or using a credit card. You may also contact one of the emergency service organizations, such as FEMA or the Red Cross, and request assistance.

Q. ATM fees are piling up, why aren't the banks waiving these fees?

A. Please contact your banks and explain your situation. The regulators are strongly encouraging banks to waive these fees for those hardest hit by the disaster.

Q. I can't reach my bank by phone or internet, what should I do?

A. If your bank is located in the heavily storm damaged area and is not a part of a major regional or national institution, it may not be open for some time. You should contact one of the emergency service organizations, such as FEMA or the Red Cross, and request assistance.

Q. I would like to wire money to a relative or friend affected by Hurricane Katrina or I would like to wire money from my current institution to another financial institution closer to my current location? How do I go about wiring money either to or from an institution?

A. First of all, contact the institution where you want to send to or retrieve money from and make sure they are able to accept or send wire transfers. You can find specific bank information on the FDIC's Bank Find. You will need to give the following information so it is good to get it all together before contacting the bank: the bank's routing number (located in the lower left hand corner of your check or deposit slip) and either your account number or the account of the individual who is to receive the money (located in the middle of the check or deposit slip). If you cannot find a bank's routing number, go to the bank's Web page. It is usually listed there. You will also want their bank's address if you are wiring to someone else. Make sure you get a confirmation letter. If

you are doing this transfer over the Internet ask them to fax or email you a conformation so the person receiving the money has it.

Make sure you know the identification verification process at the receiving institution. Some institutions will accept incoming wires for non-customers but will require some form of proof of who you are before they release the funds. Make sure you have the identification required or explain up front what you do have and ask the bank if that is acceptable.

Be aware there are often charges for wiring money so make sure you are aware of the charges up front and while many institutions are currently waiving those fees make sure you know exactly what and if you are going to be charged. You don't want to be surprised.

Never wire money to someone unsolicited or give out your account information to an unknown party.

Q. I am no longer working due to the storm and don't have the income to live on and meet my payments. If I miss some loan payments, how will this affect my credit? Will I be charged late fees?

A. Regulators are telling banks to be understanding during this time of crisis. We have asked banks to work with customers hit hardest by the hurricane. Among what we are encouraging banks to do is to allow some loan payments to be skipped with out it counting against credit histories, extend the terms of loans, and to restructure loans to take into account new sets of circumstances. Before skipping payments or changing the terms of the loan, contact your bank. FDIC is encouraging banks to be flexible in this time of crisis, including fees.

Q. I need longer term financing until insurance checks come in and I can find another job, will banks help?

A. We understand that not all banks provide short-term, unsecured loans, but regulators have encouraged banks to consider making loans on a short-term basis to help consumers. We have promised banks waivers of certain rules governing this area.

Q. Where can I find a list of banks that are working with displaced people?

A. The FDIC is attempting to keep such a list of banks. Here is the link to the most up-to-date list we have available. [Consumer Contact and Branch Information for Banks in Affected Area - PDF 82k \(PDF Help\)](#)

Q. What about the contents of my safe deposit box? Does FDIC insurance cover safe deposit boxes?

A. Deposit insurance does not cover safe deposit contents. Most safe deposit boxes are held in the bank's vault, which are fireproof and waterproof. If possible, contact the branch or office where your box was located to determine the condition of your box.

Q. How will I get my Social Security check?

A. Contact the Social Security Administration ("SSA") for instructions or information regarding any SSA assistance programs. To locate open offices, call the SSA at 1-800-772-1213. FDIC officials have been in contact with SSA officials. They report that they are having some operational disruptions like everyone else in the area, thus they are using handwritten checks. The FDIC is encouraging banks to assist those impacted by Hurricane Katrina by honoring – after

reasonable verifications – handwritten, typewritten, and laser Social Security checks issued by Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama Social Security Offices. SSA officials did indicate that at issuance, several pieces of confidential personal information are verified with the SSA recipient.

SSA officials also indicated that they were not aware of any fraud problems relating to third-party drafts or checks in previous weather-related disasters. Information from the Social Security Administration is available at: <http://www.ssa.gov/emergency/>.

Also, the United States Postal Service has issued a press release on the distribution of SSA checks that may be beneficial:
<http://www.usps.com/communications/news/serviceupdates.htm>

Q. I am worried about ID Theft since my home was severely damaged during the storm or I am not sure where my belongings are at the moment.

A. If you feel ID Theft is a real concern, you may place a "fraud alert" on your credit file, which can help prevent a thief from opening new accounts or making changes to your existing accounts. *Be aware that putting an alert on your account may prevent you from opening an account unless they are able to get in touch with you and positively confirm your identity and that you are applying for credit.*

However, if you have reason to believe you may be a victim of ID theft, contact the fraud departments of any one of the three major credit bureaus (Equifax at 1-800-525-6285, Experian at 1-888-397-3742, or TransUnion at 1-800-888-4213) to place a "fraud alert" on your credit file.

As always, protect your Social Security number, bank account and credit card numbers and other personal information, especially in response to unsolicited requests from strangers. Remember that fraud artists may try to take advantage of the crisis by tricking victims (or their loved ones) into divulging personal information or by stealing sensitive mail or documents from homes and offices.

Q. What happens if my bank has lost my records?

A. Be assured that banks are required to have extensive contingency plans for all types of disruptions to operations, including natural disasters. Banks have backup systems of records and other built-in duplications that are housed in safe locations so that financial records can be reconstructed and restored.

Q. If my local bank was destroyed, is my money still insured?

A. Yes, your money is still insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. Deposits with a FDIC insured bank or savings institution will continue to be protected up to \$100,000. However, you should keep any financial records that you have in order to help reconstruct your accounts.

Q. How can consumers deposit or cash any insurance checks they may receive?

A. By the time emergency relief and insurance payments are received the affected institutions should be prepared to process these payments for their customers. Should a customer's primary financial institution not be ready to receive these payments it is anticipated arrangements will be made with neighboring institutions to handle these special consumer needs.

Q: I know I have flood insurance, what do I do?

A: Call your insurance company. The FDIC is providing a link to a list of insurance companies that have help lines up for those affected by Hurricane Katrina.

Q: I am not sure if I have flood insurance, what do I do?

A: Attempt to contact your bank. The FDIC has provided a list of banks and contact numbers in the affected area. This file is in PDF format.

Q: I know I have flood insurance, but my bank is closed – what do I do?

A: Banks having offices in the most devastated areas are making every attempt to establish temporary facilities to service customers.

Q: I know I do not have flood insurance, is assistance available?

A: Contact FEMA.

Q. Will there be enough cash?

A. Be assured the Federal Reserve System has and will continue to meet the currency needs of the financial institution industry. The banking industry nationwide has more than sufficient resources to fill any shortfall.

Q. Is my bank safe? Do you believe the affected banks will survive?

A. We are not aware of any bank that has closed due to the impact of a natural disaster. Consumers can also rely upon the guarantees provided by the FDIC, which oversees the insurance funds that back deposits in banks and thrifts, and the National Credit Union Share Insurance Fund, which protects credit union depositors. These depositors can rest assured that deposit insurance is in full force.

Q. Who can I contact for more information?

A. The FDIC has a consumer hotline set up for this crisis. Please call 1-877-ASK-FDIC (275-3342). The hotline is operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Federal Emergency Management Association

FEMA FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What is FEMA?

FEMA is the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which is responsible for providing and coordinating emergency services in Federally declared disaster areas. FEMA works as a partner with other parts of the Federal government and with State and local governments and voluntary organizations.

What types of help are available in a disaster? Two primary Federal programs offer disaster help:

-FEMA's Individuals and Households Program provides money and direct services to those affected by a major disaster. Requirements must be met to qualify for help from this program.

-The U.S. Small Business Administration provides low-interest loans for damage to property owned by homeowners, renters, businesses and private non-profit organizations that are not fully covered by insurance.

Does disaster help have to be repaid? Money received through FEMA's Individuals and Households Program does not have to be repaid. Loans from the Small Business Administration must be repaid.

Can I apply for help for my damaged car? Yes. You will need to provide proof of ownership and insurance information.

Can I apply for help for food that has been lost because of the disaster? No. Food loss is not covered by IHP. Voluntary organizations in the disaster area may be able to help you with food needs.

Will any program pay for moving and storage expenses? Costs of moving and storage may be covered by IHP, if these costs are directly related to the disaster. Submit receipts to IHP to see if they are covered.

What happens after I apply for help with FEMA? Within about ten days of your application to FEMA, a qualified inspector will contact you to set up a time to see the damage to your property that was caused by the disaster. Your losses will be recorded and submitted to IHP. Within about ten more days, you should have a decision about whether you qualify for help from IHP. If you have been referred for a disaster loan from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), SBA will also contact you and schedule an appointment to review your disaster-related losses.

How long will it take to get FEMA/State disaster help? If you are eligible for help, you should receive a U.S. Treasury/State check or notification of a deposit to your bank account within about ten days of the inspector's visit. Other types of help may be provided later, based on specific eligibility and need.

If I have questions about my application or need to change some of the information I provided, what should I do? Call the FEMA Disaster Helpline at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) (hearing/speech impaired only: 1-800-462-7585).

If it has been more than 12 days since the FEMA inspector's visit and there has been no word from FEMA, what should I do? Call the FEMA Disaster Helpline at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) (hearing/speech impaired only: 1-800-462-7585) to ask about your application. If there is a Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) in your area, you also may inquire there about your application.

If I do not agree with the results of the inspection or with the amount of money I received from FEMA, what should I do? You can appeal the decision. Appeal procedures are outlined in

this guide (page 12), or you can call the FEMA Disaster Helpline at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) (hearing/speech impaired only: 1-800-462-7585) for information about the appeal process.

What type of ownership documentation can I provide to support my application for help?

Below are a few types of documents that may be provided to prove ownership:

- Deed or Official record may be the original deed or deed of trust to the property listing you as the legal owner.
- Title number that lists you on the actual escrow or title document for the purchase of the dwelling.
- Mortgage payment book or other mortgage documents (i.e. late payment notice, foreclosure notice) may be used to verify the ownership when your name is listed along with the damaged dwelling address.
- Real property insurance must be for the damage dwelling you are occupying with your name listed as the Insured.
- Tax receipts or a property tax bill showing the damaged dwelling and listing you as the responsible party to the assessments.

What type of occupancy documentation can I provide to support my application for help?

Below are a few types of documents that may be provided to prove occupancy:

- Utility Bill for the damaged dwelling you are occupying with your name (or name of co-applicant). The utility bill should be for one of the major utilities, such as electricity, gas, or water.
- Merchant's Statement sent to the damaged dwelling you are occupying with your name (or name of co-applicant). Merchant statements include: credit card bills, delivery notices, or other first class mail addressed to you and showing the damaged dwelling address.
- Employer's Statement sent to the damaged dwelling you are occupying with your name (or name of co-applicant). An Employer's statement refers to pay stubs and similar documents sent to you and showing the damaged dwelling address.
- Current Driver's License showing the address of the damaged dwelling. Where can I get information

about flood insurance? Call a local, licensed casualty or property insurance agent or call the National Flood Insurance Program at 1-800-427-4661.

Should I begin cleaning my home before the inspection? You may clean before the inspection. If possible, take photos of the damage before you clean. Remember to keep receipts for all of your expenses.

Disaster Loans: U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA):

Why did I receive a disaster loan application from SBA after applying with FEMA? SBA is the primary source of federal funds for long-term recovery assistance for disaster victims. For disaster damage to private property owned by homeowners, renters, and non-farm businesses of all sizes, which is not fully covered by insurance, the basic form of Federal help is a low-interest disaster loan from the SBA. By making affordable loans, the SBA disaster loan program helps disaster victims pay for their repairs while keeping costs to the taxpayer reasonable.

How can I get help filling out the application for an SBA disaster loan? SBA has loan officers in SBA local disaster offices to provide face-to-face service to disaster victims. You may visit SBA at any of these locations, and without an appointment. An SBA representative will be glad to answer questions and to help complete your application. To find out where SBA disaster offices are located an applicant can call SBA toll-free at 1-800-488-5323.

If I have already received money from FEMA, but it was not enough to pay for all the work needed to fix the disaster damages, can I get more help? Yes. SBA disaster loans are available to cover the amount of repair costs that have not already been fully compensated. Application should be made to SBA for any additional amount needed to complete recovery.

I think I can pay for the repairs on my own, should I apply for a disaster loan? You may discover that the total costs to complete repairs on your own are more than you planned. With an approved SBA loan, you will know that the funds to make full repairs are available. While no one

wants additional debt, a low interest loan with affordable payments is a better alternative than not making complete disaster repairs.

What happens if I cannot afford a loan to repair damaged property? If SBA determines you cannot afford a loan, SBA will automatically refer you back to FEMA for additional help. FEMA may be able to provide money for other than housing needs, however this additional help is not available to businesses. FEMA's additional help is intended to meet necessary expenses and serious needs not met by any other form of help, including insurance and SBA disaster loans. Remember, if you were sent a SBA disaster loan application, SBA will not refer you back to FEMA unless a completed loan application is returned to the SBA and SBA determines that you cannot afford a loan.

Your Civil Rights And Disaster Assistance

What forms of discrimination do Civil Rights laws prohibit? There are many forms of illegal discrimination that can limit the opportunity of people to gain equal access to services and programs.

Among other things, in operating a FEMA-assisted program, a recipient (state or local government agency that receives Federal disaster funds from FEMA) cannot, on the basis of race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, or economic status, either directly or through contractual means:

- Deny program services, aids or benefits;
- Provide a different service, aid or benefit, or provide them in a manner different than they are provided to others; or,
- Segregate or separately treat individuals in any matter related to the receipt of any service, aid, or benefit.

These prohibitions also apply to FEMA itself in its operation of federally conducted programs.

What if I have a Civil Rights complaint? Each Federal Agency that provides Federal financial assistance is responsible for investigating complaints of discrimination in the use of its funds. If you believe you or others protected by the Civil Rights laws have been discriminated against in receiving disaster assistance, you may contact a FEMA Equal Rights Officer (ERO), who has the job of ensuring equal access to all FEMA disaster programs. The ERO will attempt to resolve your issues.

You may reach the ERO by calling 1-800-621-FEMA (1-800-621-3362) or TTY 1-800-462-7585. If the matter is not resolved, you may file a complaint with FEMA. A signed, written complaint should be sent to the Office of Equal Rights, generally within 180 days of the date of the alleged discrimination. The complaint must include:

- Your name, address, and telephone number. Your complaint must be signed. If you are filing on behalf of another person, include your name, address, telephone number, and your relationship to that person (e.g., friend, attorney, parent, etc.)
- The name and address of the agency, institution or department you believe discriminated against you.
- How, why, and when you believe you were discriminated against. Include as much background information as possible about the alleged acts of discrimination. Include names of individuals whom you allege discriminated against you, if you know them.
- The names of any persons, if known, that FEMA could contact for additional information to support or clarify your allegations.

What will FEMA do with my complaint? Once a complaint is filed, it will be reviewed by FEMA to determine whether it has jurisdiction to investigate the issues you have raised. If your complaint is accepted, FEMA will investigate it and attempt to resolve any violations that are found. If negotiations to correct a violation are unsuccessful, enforcement proceedings may be instituted.

What if I am retaliated against for asserting my rights or filing a complaint? You should be aware that a recipient or a Federal agency is prohibited from retaliating against you or any person because he or she opposed an unlawful policy or practice, or made charges, testified, or

participated in any complaint action under a Civil Rights law. If you believe that you have been retaliated against, you should immediately contact FEMA's Office of Equal Rights.

**IF YOU SUSPECT SOMEONE IS FILING FALSE DAMAGE CLAIMS, CALL THE FEMA FRAUD HOTLINE AT:
1-800-323-8603.**

**HELP FEMA MAKE SURE THAT DISASTER AID GOES ONLY TO THOSE WHO DESERVE IT.
IT IS A VIOLATION OF FEDERAL LAW TO FILE A FALSE CLAIM.**

Health and Human Services

THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES is the United States government's principal agency for protecting the health of all Americans and providing essential human services, especially for those who are least able to help themselves.

THE DEPARTMENT INCLUDES MORE THAN 300 PROGRAMS, covering a wide spectrum of activities. Some highlights include:

- *Health and social science research*
- *Preventing disease, including immunization services*
- *Assuring food and drug safety*
- *Medicare (health insurance for elderly and disabled Americans) and Medicaid (health insurance for low-income people)*
- *Health information technology*
- *Financial assistance and services for low-income families*
- *Improving maternal and infant health*
- *Head Start (pre-school education and services)*
- *Faith-based and community initiatives*
- *Preventing child abuse and domestic violence*
- *Substance abuse treatment and prevention*
- *Services for older Americans, including home-delivered meals*
- *Comprehensive health services for Native Americans*
- *Medical preparedness for emergencies, including potential terrorism.*

Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Mike Leavitt declared a public health emergency for Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida, and Alabama. This action allows the Department to waive certain Medicare, Medicaid, State Child Health Insurance Program, and HIPAA requirements as well as make grants and enter into contracts more expeditiously during this emergency.

HHS is establishing a network of up to 40 medical shelters, staffed by 4,000 medical personnel and with the collective capacity of 10,000 beds. The first shelters are in place in Baton Rouge and currently treating patients. More shelters will be opened within hours.

HHS identified 2,600 beds in hospitals in the immediate area and 40,000 beds nationwide should they be needed.

HHS continues to ship pallets of basic first aid materials and supplies to the area, and the Centers for Disease Control and Food and Drug Administration are assembling public health teams.

Housing and Urban Development

HUD's mission is to increase homeownership, support community development and increase access to affordable housing free from discrimination.

HUD ANNOUNCES DISASTER ASSISTANCE FOR HURRICANE AFFECTED AREAS

Establishes toll-free phone number for employees and FHA-insured homeowners

WASHINGTON – Housing and Urban Development Secretary Alphonso Jackson today announced that he is instructing all FHA-approved lenders to provide foreclosure relief to FHA-insured families who are affected by Hurricane Katrina. The relief includes a special 90-day moratorium on all foreclosures of FHA-insured properties in the Presidentially declared disaster areas. Jackson is also encouraging lenders to undertake actions such as mortgage modification, refinancing, and waiver of late charges.

"We understand the pain that these families are going through in the wake of Hurricane Katrina," Jackson said. "We are committed to giving those families the security of having a roof over their heads as soon as possible - even if it's a temporary solution."

Following President Bush's federal disaster declaration, HUD began providing staff to Disaster Field Offices set up by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. HUD's initial concern is to help meet the immediate housing needs of those whose homes have been damaged or destroyed. HUD is also reaching out to its private sector partners for assistance. HUD is contacting: top mortgage lenders about their inventory of repossessed homes; the homebuilding industry for help with building materials and supplying construction workers; its housing counseling network to assist displaced homeowners; and the manufactured housing industry about available housing stock.

HUD has established a toll-free telephone number for Department employees and FHA-insured homeowners. That number is: **1 (866) 641-8102**

HUD will:

- **Provide Temporary Housing and Shelter** – HUD will identify vacant multi-family housing, public housing units and HUD-owned homes that could be used as temporary housing for those forced from their homes;
- **Grant Immediate Foreclosure Relief** – HUD will grant a 90-day moratorium on foreclosures and forbearance on foreclosures of Federal Housing Administration-insured homes;
- **Reprogram and Accelerate Federal Block Grants** – *Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)* and *HOME* grantees may reprogram previously awarded grants to redirect their focus to disaster recovery activities but grantees must request the reprogram from HUD;
- **Provide Relief for Indian Housing** – HUD will provide Indian Community Development Block Grant funding (up to \$425,000 per grantee) for imminent threat to Indian Housing and Tribal areas;
- **Provide Public Housing Reserve for Disasters and Emergencies** – HUD has funding available for public housing authorities to help rehabilitate damaged properties;
- **Make Available Programs for Damaged or Destroyed Properties** – HUD's Section 203(k) loan program enables homebuyers and homeowners who have lost their homes to finance both the purchase and/or refinancing of a house and the cost of its rehabilitation through a single mortgage. It also allows homeowners who have damaged houses to finance the rehabilitation of their existing single-family home. This program encourages lenders to make mortgages available to borrowers who would not otherwise qualify for

- conventional loans on affordable terms and to residents of disadvantaged neighborhoods;
- **Mortgage Insurance for Disaster Victims** – HUD has a special mortgage insurance program under Section 203(h) of the National Housing Act to assist disaster victims. Under this program, individuals or families whose residences were destroyed or damaged to such an extent that reconstruction or replacement is necessary are eligible for 100 percent financing; and
 - **Offer Assistance to Ginnie Mae Issuers in Disaster Areas**
Ginnie Mae will provide assistance to Mortgage-Backed Securities (MBS) issuers with significant concentrations of loans within the affected areas. The assistance includes help in making payments to MBS investors where homeowners are unable to make payment, and eliminating delinquent loans from delinquency statistics used in risk monitoring.

Specific guidance for FHA-approved lenders can be also be found on HUD's website.

Internal Revenue Service FAQs About Your Tax Relief

What if I have a tax return due?

The IRS is giving people and businesses more time to file their tax returns.

Generally speaking, you now have until Oct. 31, 2005 to file a tax return. This relief applies to any return due on or after Aug. 29, 2005. Both individuals and businesses qualify for this special relief.

This relief is automatic—you don't have to ask for it. All you need to do is file your return by October 31. Write the words, "Hurricane Katrina," in red at the top of your return. If you haven't already paid any tax due, pay it with your return. No interest or late filing or paying penalties will be due for the period Aug. 29, 2005, though Oct. 31, 2005, if the return is filed and all taxes are paid, in full, by October 31.

Do I have more time to make my quarterly estimated tax payment?

Yes. You have until Oct. 31, 2005 to make this payment. This includes the third quarter estimated tax payment (Form 1040ES) normally due on September 15.

Do businesses have more time to make payroll tax deposits?

Yes. Businesses will have until September 23 to make federal tax deposit (FTD) payments with incurring a late deposit penalty. This relief applies to any deposit originally due on or after Aug. 29, 2005.

This relief applies to employers who deposit social security, Medicare and federal income taxes withheld from employee paychecks. Businesses who deposit federal excise taxes are also eligible for this relief.

Are tax relief assistance payments taxable?

Usually, no.

People in a Presidentially-declared disaster area who receive grants from state programs, charitable organizations or employers to cover medical, transportation or temporary housing expenses do not include these grants in their income.

My home was damaged by the hurricane, and I don't have insurance. Do I qualify for any special tax relief?

If you suffered major damage, you may be able to deduct some of your loss on your federal income tax return. Only losses not covered by insurance or other reimbursements are eligible. Because of the way this deduction is figured, only major losses normally result in tax savings. Tax Topic 515 has more information about losses and theft.

Losses on business or rental property also qualify for tax relief. Different rules apply

to figuring this deduction.

I heard that I can choose when to claim losses to property located in a disaster area. Is that true?

Yes. There is a special rule that applies to deductible losses on property located in a Presidentially-declared disaster area. Under this rule, you can choose to claim your losses on your 2004 return or wait until the end of the year and claim them on your 2005 return.

I want to claim my disaster losses on my 2004 return. Since I already filed my 2004 return, how do I do that?

You do not have to fill out your entire 2004 return all over again. Instead, file an amended return using Form 1040X. You use this form to claim your losses and show the items that need to be changed on your original return. Tax Topic 308 explains how to file an amended return.

What other kind of relief is available?

The IRS will waive the usual fees and expedite requests for copies of previously-filed tax returns for people who need them to apply for benefits or to file amended returns claiming disaster-related losses. Write the words, "Hurricane Katrina," in red, at the top of Form 4506, "Request for Copy of Tax Return," or Form 4506-T, "Request for Transcript of Tax Return."

People who are contacted by the IRS on a collection or examination matter should explain how the disaster affects them so that the IRS can provide appropriate consideration to their case.

Just a reminder that the IRS will update its Hurricane Katrina information page and its Disaster Relief page periodically.

IRS Grants Tax Relief for Hurricane Katrina Victims

IR-2005-84, Aug. 30, 2005

WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service today announced special relief for taxpayers in the Presidential Disaster Areas struck by Hurricane Katrina.

These taxpayers generally will have until Oct. 31, 2005, to file tax returns and submit tax payments. The IRS will abate interest and any late filing or late payment penalties that would otherwise apply. This relief includes the Sept. 15 due date for estimated taxes and for calendar-year corporate returns with automatic extensions.

"People affected by Hurricane Katrina have more than enough concerns — taxes shouldn't be among them," said IRS Commissioner Mark W. Everson. "We hope the relief we are providing will help taxpayers in their financial recovery from this devastating storm."

The disaster areas designated for individual relief include:

- 31 Louisiana parishes: Acadia, Ascension, Assumption, Calcasieu, Cameron, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberia, Iberville, Jefferson, Jefferson Davis, Lafayette, Lafourche, Livingston, Orleans, Pointe Coupee, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. Helena, St. James, St. John, St. Mary, St. Martin, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Terrebonne, Vermilion, Washington, West Baton Rouge and West Feliciana;
- 15 Mississippi counties: Amite, Forrest, George, Greene, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Lamar, Marion, Pearl River, Perry, Pike, Stone, Walthall, and Wilkinson; and
- Three Alabama counties: Baldwin, Mobile and Washington.

Among the tax relief details are the following:

- The Federal Tax Deposit (FTD) Penalty Waiver Period for employment and excise tax deposits is Aug. 29 – Sept. 23, 2005.
- The Extension Period for returns and other tax payments is Aug. 29 – Oct. 31, 2005.
- The Disaster Designation for this area is “Hurricane Katrina” — taxpayers mark certain relief-related forms with this designation in red.

IRS Creates Disaster Relief Toll-Free Number

IR-2005-88, Sept. 1, 2005

WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service announced today the establishment of a special toll-free telephone number for use by taxpayers affected by Hurricane Katrina.

People affected by Katrina who need help with tax matters can call 1-866-562-5227.

Beginning today, taxpayers can call the special number Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 10:00 pm local time.

Callers to this dedicated telephone line can find out about available tax relief, get free copies of their tax return transcripts and receive Disaster Tax Loss Kits. Callers may also be referred to the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s assistance lines for additional help.

Affected taxpayers who need copies of tax returns to apply for aid or other purposes can have the normal user fee waived by writing “Hurricane Katrina” in red across the top margin of their Form 4506, Request for Copy of Tax Return.

More information about tax relief for victims, making charitable contributions and links to other government web pages is available at IRS.gov.

The IRS is continuing to monitor the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and will provide

additional relief and guidance in the days ahead.

Local Offices are as follows:

City	Street Address	Days/Hours of Service	Telephone *
Columbia	1835 Assembly St. Columbia, SC 29201	Monday-Friday - 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	(803) 765-5544
Florence	401 W. Evans St. Florence, SC 29501	Monday-Friday - 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	(843) 664-8889
Greenville	440 Roper Mountain Rd. Greenville, SC 29615	Monday-Friday - 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	(864) 284-9097
Myrtle Beach	601 19th Ave. N. Myrtle Beach ,SC 29577	Monday-Friday - 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.(Closed for lunch 12:00 noon-1:00 p.m.)	(843) 626-2700
Charleston	1 Poston Rd. Charleston, SC 29407	Monday-Friday - 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	(843) 566-0209

Medicare

CMS ACTIONS TO HELP BENEFICIARIES, PROVIDERS IN KATRINA STRICKEN AREAS

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has acted to assure that the Medicare, Medicaid and State Children's Health Insurance Programs will flex to accommodate the emergency health care needs of beneficiaries and medical providers in the Hurricane Katrina devastated states.

Many of the programs' normal operating procedures will be relaxed to speed provision of health care services to the elderly, children and persons with disabilities who depend upon them.

Because of hurricane damage to local health care facilities, many beneficiaries have been evacuated to neighboring states where receiving hospitals and nursing homes have no health care records, information on current health status or even verification of the person's status as a Medicare or Medicaid beneficiary. CMS is assuring those facilities that in this circumstance the normal burden of documentation will be waived and that the presumption of eligibility should be made.

Federal Medicaid officials are also working closely with state Medicaid agencies to coordinate resolution of interstate payment agreements for recipients who are served outside their home states.

The agency will also offer the following relief immediately:

- Health care providers that furnish medical services in good faith, but who cannot comply with normal program requirements because of Hurricane Katrina, will be paid for services provided and will be exempt from sanctions for noncompliance, unless it is discovered that fraud or abuse occurred.
- Crisis services provided to Medicare and Medicaid patients who have been transferred to facilities not certified to participate in the programs will be paid.
- Programs will reimburse facilities for providing dialysis to patients with kidney failure in alternative settings.
- Medicare contractors may pay the costs of ambulance transfers of patients being evacuated from one health care facility to another.
- Normal prior authorization and out-of-network requirements will also be waived for enrollees of Medicare, Medicaid or SCHIP managed care plans.
- Normal licensing requirements for doctors, nurses and other health care professionals who cross state lines to provide emergency care in stricken areas will be waived as long as the provider is licensed in their home state.
- Certain HIPAA privacy requirements will be waived so that health care providers can talk to family members about a patient's condition even if that patient is unable to grant that permission to the provider.
- Hospitals and other facilities can be flexible in billing for beds that have been dedicated to other uses, for example, if a psychiatric unit bed is used for an acute care patient admitted during the crisis.
- Hospital emergency rooms will not be held liable under the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act (EMTALA) for transferring patients to other facilities for assessment, if the original facility is in the area where a public health emergency has been declared.

More information about CMS emergency relief activities, including a detailed explanation of billing and payment policy revisions, and phone numbers for the state medical assistance offices can be found at www.cms.hhs.gov. Frequently asked questions and their answers on the site will be updated daily by 2pm.

Office of Personnel Management

Are you a current Federal employee or a retired Federal employee or annuitant who has been impacted by Hurricane Katrina? If so, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management has set up a new toll-free number for you. 1-800-307-8298.

If you are a current Federal employee and you have not yet contacted your agency, please call **1-800-307-8298**.

For current and retired Federal employees or annuitants, call between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. Central Time to speak with an operator who will answer your questions about health insurance, life insurance, status on paychecks, retiree annuity payments, and disability issues.

MEMORANDUM FOR HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

NEW

**FROM: Linda M. Springer
Director**

SUBJECT: Emergency Leave Transfer for Federal Employees Affected By Hurricane Katrina

President George W. Bush has authorized OPM to establish, if needed, an emergency leave transfer program to assist employees affected by Hurricane Katrina. An emergency leave transfer program will permit employees in an executive agency to donate unused annual leave for transfer to employees of the same or other agencies who are adversely affected by the hurricane and who need additional time off from work without having to use their own paid leave.

We believe the agencies with employees affected by Hurricane Katrina are in the best position to determine whether, and how much, donated annual leave is needed by their employees and to quickly facilitate the transfer of donated annual leave within their agencies.

Therefore, in response to the President's directive, we are authorizing the affected agencies to do the following:

- (1) Determine whether, and how much, donated annual leave is needed by affected employees;
- (2) As appropriate, approve leave donors and/or leave recipients in their agencies;
- (3) Facilitate the distribution of donated annual leave from approved leave donors to approved leave recipients within their agencies; and
- (4) Determine the period of time for which donated annual leave may be accepted for distribution to approved leave recipients.

OPM's regulations on the administration of the emergency leave transfer program are available on OPM's Web site at http://www.opm.gov/fedregis/html/dec_99.htm. Additional guidance is available at <http://www.opm.gov/oca/leave/HTML/emerg.htm>.

Most affected employees will be granted excused absence or receive other payments to cope with the immediate emergency. The emergency leave transfer program will be in place to assist approved leave recipients as the need for donated leave becomes known.

Benefits Administration Letter

NEW

Number: 05-203

Date: August 31, 2005

Subject: Hurricane Katrina and the FEGLI, FLTCIP, FSAFEDS and FEHB Programs

Our hearts go out to those affected by Hurricane Katrina. Here's a quick update on how this disaster may affect our various benefit programs.

Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance Program (FEGLI)

The Office of Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (OFEGLI) has already instituted its expedited payment procedures.

What Is the First Step for the Agency?

If your agency receives information that one of your insured employees and/or insured family members was killed or accidentally dismembered as a result of Katrina, please let us know by emailing fegli@opm.gov with whatever details you may have, including the enrollee's name, even if you don't yet have all the information to certify the coverage and submit the claim form(s).

What Are the FEGLI Program's Expedited Procedures?

We are waiving the requirement for a death certificate for deaths in this situation. OFEGLI will accept a written statement from the agency that the insured was in the area affected by Katrina when the death occurred or, to the best of their knowledge, the insured is missing and presumed (or confirmed) dead.

If such a statement is not available, OFEGLI will consider whatever information is available, including newspaper accounts or information from other reliable sources, including reliable sites on the Internet.

Should Agencies Annotate FEGLI Claim Forms?

Yes, this will help immensely. Please indicate on any claim forms and certification forms sent to OFEGLI that such an incident is a Katrina Claim. That will help OFEGLI know that special expedited procedures should be followed.

Where Should Agencies Send the FEGLI Claim Forms and Certifications?

Please send such claims to the same address you use for other FEGLI claims - OFEGLI, P.O. Box 2627, Jersey City, NJ 07303-2627 and write "Katrina Claim" on the front of the envelope. You may wish to send the claims via an overnight service in which case you must use a street address (OFEGLI, 2 Montgomery Street, Jersey City, NJ 07302-3802, phone 1-800-633-4542).

Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program (FLTCIP)

FLTCIP enrollees who live in the affected areas and miss premium payments during this time of crisis will not have their coverage cancelled. Long Term Care Partners will work with these enrollees at a later time to bring their accounts up to date.

Federal Flexible Spending Account Program (FSAFEDS)

It is possible, though rare, that FSAFEDS enrollees who work for an agency serviced by the National Finance Center may find that an allotment was not taken out of their pay for one or possibly two pay periods. That should be rare, because NFC only makes changes to the FSAFEDS allotments if there is a change in the amount of the allotment. For most enrollees, there isn't a change in FSAFEDS allotments from one pay period to the next.

Please contact us at fsa@opm.gov if there are any issues with FSAFEDS allotments or claims that are causing a hardship on affected employees and their families.

Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHB)

We are contacting FEHB carriers to ask them to demonstrate maximum flexibility under their OPM contract, including the following:

1. We expect fee-for-service carriers to relax certain provisions such as their pre-certification requirement that the plan must be notified within two business days of an emergency admission.
2. We expect fee-for-service and HMOs to relax requirements about notification and levels of benefit payment when victims are taken to non-plan and/or non-PPO hospitals or other treatment centers.
3. We expect plans to make certain that FEHB members get additional supplies of medications as backup for emergency situations if necessary.
4. Though charges for work-related injuries sustained by Federal workers are payable by the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP), we are encouraging FEHB plans to provide immediate payment and seek subsequent reimbursement from OWCP.

Passports

The New Orleans Passport Agency is **CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE** due to impact of Hurricane Katrina.

In order to assist customers whose applications are being processed by the New Orleans Passport Agency:

- If you are not traveling in the next 6 weeks, there is no action required from you at this time. Please visit this website periodically for further updates.
- If you applied **BEFORE August, 25, 2005** at an Acceptance Facility in the New Orleans Passport Agency Region (Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia (except DC suburbs including the Cities of Alexandria and Falls Church and the Counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudon, Prince William, and Stafford), Wisconsin and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico), **OR**
- If you applied **BEFORE August, 25, 2005** at an Acceptance Facility in Southern California (all Counties South of and including San Luis Obispo, Kern, and San Bernardino), Clark County, Nevada, New York City, and Long Island, **AND**
- You are traveling within the next 6 weeks and submitted your passport application from any of the above listed locations, **THEN**

Please contact the National Passport Information Center (NPIC), toll-free, at 1-877-487-2778 (TDD/TTY 1-888-874-7793) to get specific information on how to proceed in getting your passport.

If the above information applies to you, do not use the Online Status-Check service on this website as the information received may not be correct. Instead, to find out the status of your application, contact NPIC, toll-free, at 1-877-487-2778 (TDD/TTY 1-888-874-7793) or via email at http://travel.state.gov/passport/about/npic/npic_896.html.

The New Orleans Passport Agency is not honoring any existing nor making new appointments until further notice. If you are traveling urgently and you would like to appear at another Passport Agency, click here to see a list of Passport Agencies.

If you applied from any of the areas listed above **AFTER August 25, 2005** your passport application will be sent to another Passport Agency for issuance.

The Passport Services Office provides information and services to American citizens about how to obtain, replace or change a passport.

A passport is an internationally recognized travel document that verifies the identity and nationality of the bearer. A valid U.S. passport is required to enter and leave most foreign countries. Only the U.S. Department of State has the authority to grant, issue or verify United States passports.

Social Security Administration

The Social Security Administration is doing everything it can to ensure that monthly payments get to beneficiaries affected by Hurricane Katrina.

FOR PERSONS WHO HAVE DIRECT DEPOSIT:

- ∅ If you receive your Social Security payment by direct deposit, your payment is scheduled to be deposited into your account as usual. However, if you experience any difficulty getting your payment, you can go to any open Social Security office and request an immediate payment.

FOR PERSONS WHO RECEIVE PAPER CHECKS:

- ∅ If you normally get a paper check and do not receive it, you can go to any open Social Security office and request an immediate payment.

IF YOU ARE IN AN AFFECTED AREA WHERE SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICES ARE CLOSED:

- ∅ The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is in the process of establishing emergency centers. Once established, Social Security employees will be there to help you get your payment.

For more information on the nearest open Social Security office, you can call 1-800-772-1213.

Transportation Security Administration

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) was created in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 as part of the Aviation and Transportation Security Act signed into law by President George W. Bush on November 19, 2001. TSA was originally in the [Department of Transportation](#) but was moved to the [Department of Homeland Security](#) in March 2003.

TSA's mission is to protect the nation's transportation systems by ensuring the freedom of movement for people and commerce. In February 2002, TSA assumed responsibility for security at the nation's airports and by the end of the year had deployed a federal work force to meet challenging Congressional deadlines for screening all passengers and baggage.

TSA Playing Leading Role in Evacuations from New Orleans

TSA has aided in the evacuation of approximately 22,000 victims of Hurricane Katrina from Louis Armstrong New Orleans Airport. A total of 623 screeners and federal air marshals from all over the country were dispatched to the airport. About one-third of the evacuees were elderly, injured or had special needs, and about 4,000 evacuees had to be carried on to the 210 commercial and military medevac flights. Ten other airports were affected by Hurricane Katrina but have resumed at least limited operations.

Assistance Information for TSA Screeners Impacted by Hurricane

TSA Screeners displaced by Hurricane Katrina should immediately call 1-866-301-7214 for assistance or call the FSD at the airport closest to them.

Emergency Contact Information - In the event of a transportation security emergency, contact the authorities at the airport or your local law enforcement directly.

To contact TSA, please call **1-866-289-9673** or E-mail the [Contact Center](#) (TSA-ContactCenter@dhs.gov).

Hurricane Katrina: Airport Status

Airport Update

9/07/2005, 4:30 p.m.

The following airports are open and fully operational for commercial, civil and military flights:

Louisiana

- Baton Rouge Metropolitan Airport, LA (BTR)
- Lafayette Regional Airport, LA (LFT)
- Lake Charles Regional Airport (LCH)
- Harry P. Williams Memorial Airport, Patterson, LA (PTN)
- Alexandria International Airport, LA (AEX)
- John E. Lewis Field Airport, McComb/Pike County (MCB)

Mississippi

- Meridian Key Field, MS (MEI)

Jackson International Airport, MS (JAN)
Hawkins Field Airport (HKS)
Keesler Air Force Base, Biloxi (BIX)

Alabama

Mobile Downtown Airport (BFM)
Mobile Regional Airport (MOB)

The following airports are open only to aircraft supporting relief efforts:

Louisiana

Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport (MSY)

Mississippi

Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport (GPT)
Stennis International Airport, Bay St. Louis (HSA)

The following airports are open, but may be limited to visual and/or daytime operations:

Louisiana

Houma Terrebonne Airport (HUM)
Naval Air Station Alvin Callendar (NBG)
Chennault International, Lake Charles (CWF)
Northshore Regional, Hammond (HDC)
Thibodaux Municipal Airport (L83)
Slidell Airport (ASD)

Mississippi

Bobby L. Chain Municipal Airport, Hattiesburg (HBG)
Naval Air Station Meridian, MS (NMM)
Hardy-Anders Field, Natchez (HEZ)
Pascagoula/Lott International Airport (PQL)

The following airports are closed or their status is unknown:

Louisiana

New Orleans Lakefront Airport (NEW)

by Hurricane Katrina but have resumed at least limited operations.

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services

The USCIS website is located at: <http://uscis.gov/graphics/index.htm>

LOST OR DESTROYED IMMIGRATION DOCUMENTS - To obtain replacement documents individuals most personally go to the nearest USCIS office. In South Carolina the offices are located in Greer and Charleston.

Charleston Office
1 Poston Road, Suite 130
Parkshore Center
Charleston, SC 29407

Greer Office
142 D. West Phillips Rd.
Greer, SC 29560

An exception to the I-9 form (Employment Eligibility Verification Form) is being made for victims of Katrina. No documents are necessary for the form for the first 45 days

Through a network of local offices, [Application Support Centers](#), [Service Centers](#), local area immigration services [field offices](#), [National Customer Service Call \(NCSC\) Centers](#), [Forms Centers](#), and the Internet, USCIS processes all immigrant and non-immigrant benefits provided to visitors of the United States, including:

Family-based petitions -- facilitating the process for close relatives to immigrate, gain permanent residency, work, etc.;

Employment-based petitions -- facilitating the process for current and prospective employees to immigrate or stay in the U.S. temporarily;

Asylum and Refugee processing -- adjudicating asylum and the processing of refugees;

Naturalization – approving citizenship of eligible persons who wish to become U.S. citizens;

Special status programs – adjudicating eligibility for U.S. immigration status as a form of humanitarian aid to foreign nationals; and,

Document issuance and renewal – including verification of eligibility, production and issuance of immigration documents.

United States Department of Agriculture

Department of Agriculture - The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is sending experienced emergency response personnel to assist in incident response coordination. To date, the Forest Service has assigned 13 management and logistical teams and 35 crews of 20 people each to the affected areas and host communities. These resources are intended to assist in setting up logistics staging areas, the distribution of food products, and debris removal.

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is providing food at shelters and mass feeding sites, issuing emergency food stamps and infant formula, and distributing food packages directly to needy households. 80,000 pounds of USDA-donated commodities which consist of mixed meats, cheese, peanut butter, and pudding, arrived in Baton Rouge, La. today. Additionally, four trucks of baby food products were ordered for immediate shipment. One truck of infant formula will arrive in Baton Rouge today. The other three trucks of baby food products are on the way.

USDA has also authorized states to pre-load electronic food benefit cards with \$50 to immediately purchase food even before applications have been processed to receive complete benefits. These cards can be used by displaced residents as they move from shelters to temporary housing.

USDA Rural Development will provide a six-month moratorium on payments for 50,000 low-income residents in the affected areas. USDA will also be taking an inventory of vacant USDA housing to help accommodate displaced residents.

United States Department of Justice

<http://www.usdoj.gov/>

Missing and Found Children

U.S. Department of Justice is working with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. View photos of children looking for their parents and of missing children. If you have any information, call their hot line: 1-888-544-5475.

Department of Justice EMERGENCY GUIDANCE

DOJ Emergency Personnel Information

Payroll Information

The **National Finance Center (NFC)** has resumed operations at its alternate work locations in Dallas and Philadelphia. Back-up systems are **fully operational** and ready to accept and process payroll/personnel transactions. Payroll and Personnel Offices may begin processing transactions for this pay period. Timekeepers should prepare and transmit T&A reports **immediately** to ensure employees are paid on time. Time & attendance transmissions are not expected for those employees located in the affected hurricane areas and instead are ensuring that those employees are paid based on a regular 80 hour tour of duty for full-time employees or based on a previous pay period work schedule for other employees. Special arrangements are underway for the employees from/in the local New Orleans, Gulf Coast, and surrounding areas to ensure they get paid. We are working with USDA, the Postal Service and FEMA to identify bank routing numbers for those unable to receive payments. Alternate banking solutions are being looked into. Employees may access the Employee Personnel Page (EPP) to view their payroll information or submit transactions in the Employee Self Service application of the EPP. Servicing personnel offices should contact HRSAG on 202-616-6328; or the T&A Help Desk at 202-616-6379/6380 regarding system processing.

United States Department of Labor

Hurricane Recovery Assistance

President George W. Bush has declared major disasters for impacted areas in Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida, and Alabama. The U.S. Department of Labor is supporting efforts in these communities in coordination with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the agency that is actively managing federal assistance to these affected communities in an effort to expedite response efforts and save lives.

The Department of Labor support includes the following:

National Emergency Grants (NEGs)

Impacted states can apply for NEG funds that can be used to temporarily employ dislocated workers. These funds can be used to employ workers on projects that provide food, clothing, shelter and other humanitarian assistance for disaster victims.

Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA)

The Department of Labor is working with state and local governments in disaster areas and relief sites to issue unemployment insurance and disaster unemployment assistance. For more information, call 1-866-4-USA-DOL (1-866-487-2365).

Occupational Safety and Health

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is making available technical assistance and resources to help protect those participating in cleanup and recovery efforts.

Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA)

EBSA is extending pension plan filing deadlines.

Hurricane Katrina has proven to be one of the most dangerous storms in U.S. history. Hazards from weakened and damaged trees, downed power lines, high water, and other dangers remain. We urge citizens to be mindful of instructions from state and local officials who have asked that individuals remain in shelters, homes or safe places until given further notice. Individuals in declared counties can register online for disaster assistance at www.fema.gov or call FEMA's toll free registration line at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362); for the hearing impaired TTY 800-462-7585.

United States Department of State

Contacting Foreign Nationals Possibly Affected by Hurricane Katrina

We would like to advise concerned family members of foreign nationals residing or traveling in areas affected by Hurricane Katrina to try to reach their family members by phone, email or other available means.

If they cannot reach their family members directly, we recommend they contact their embassy in Washington, DC for assistance. Reports from the region indicate that some phone lines are working but experiencing heavy call volume, so family members should be encouraged to keep trying.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (www.fema.gov) and the American Red Cross (www.redcross.org) both have web sites available that contain information on the current conditions in the region.

Birth Certificates

- **I am a U.S. citizen, where can I obtain a copy of my birth certificate?**

To obtain a copy of a birth certificate, if you were born a U.S. citizen in a U.S. state, please see: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/howto/w2w/w2welcom.htm>.

You also may wish to contact:

U.S. Department of State
Passport Correspondence Office
1111 Nineteenth Street NW, Suite 510
Washington, DC 20524
Tel: 202-955-0307

- **I am not a U.S. citizen, where can I obtain a copy of my birth certificate?**

If you were born a U.S. citizen outside the U.S., please see:
http://travel.state.gov/consular_records.html.

If you were born the citizen of another country you may need to contact a consular officer at one of that country's foreign embassies or consulates. For embassies and consulates of other countries in the U.S., please see the following sites:

Foreign Embassies in the U.S.
<http://www.state.gov/misc/10125.htm>

Foreign Consular Offices in the United States
<http://www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/fco/>

Embassies -- Foreign in the U.S.

- **Where can I find information about foreign embassies and consulates in the U.S., including where they are located?**

For embassies and consulates of other countries in the U.S., please see the following sites:

Foreign Embassies in the U.S.
<http://www.state.gov/misc/10125.htm>

Foreign Consular Offices in the United States
<http://www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/fco/>

- **How can I locate a foreign diplomat located in the U.S.?**

Diplomatic List
<http://www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/dpl/>

- **How can I locate Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members of Foreign Governments in the U.S.?**

Central Intelligence Agency: Chiefs of State & Cabinet Members of Foreign Governments
<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/chiefs/index.html>

Embassies -- U.S.

- **Where can I find information about U.S. embassies and consulates in foreign countries, including where they are located?**

To locate a U.S. Embassy Web site, please see:
<http://usembassy.state.gov>

- **How can I locate a U.S. diplomat in another country?**

To locate contact addresses and key officers at U.S. Embassies, please see:
<http://www.foia.state.gov/mms/KOH/keyofficers.asp>

Please note that many State Department offices and posts do not deal with the public via e-mail. The State Department's Bureau of Information Resources and Management does not provide a directory of e-mail addresses for posts or individuals, but we will ensure that this bureau is aware of all public requests for e-mail addresses.

State Department Records

- **Where can I find old records of the State Department?**

Microfilmed copies of older State Department records can be obtained by contacting the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). NARA records are arranged by the creating agency and are assigned particular "record group" numbers. State Department records can be found in Record Group 59. More information about NARA's State Department holdings is available at the following sites:

Guide to the General Records of the Department of State
http://archiveseleanor.nara.gov/research_room/federal_records_guide/general_department_of_state_rg059.html

General Record of the Department of State
http://archiveseleanor.nara.gov/iwg/declassified_records/rg_059_state_department/rg_059_general_records_1.html

To contact NARA with questions about State Department records:
http://www.archives.gov/global_pages/contact_us.html

Use the inquire Form at:
http://www.archives.gov/global_pages/inquire_form.html

Visa Information & Contacts

- **Who can I talk to about my visa?**

For assistance, please contact the experts at Visa Services directly at:

Public Inquiries
Visa Services
U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC 20522-0106
Tel: 202-663-1225
<http://uscis.gov/graphics/howdoi/aau.htm>

- **What is the e-mail address for the Visa Services office and is there any special format I should use when sending an e-mail?**

If you choose to contact Visa Services by e-mail at usvisa@state.gov, the Visa Office requires that you type a particular code into the subject line of your e-mail message in order to more efficiently process your inquiry. These codes are included below:

IF YOU ARE IN THE U.S., and would like to stay longer, or work in the U.S., or change from a certain visa category to another, or change your employer, type INS

For information on visa denial, type DENIAL

If you want to visit the U.S., type VISIT

If you want to work in the U.S., type WORK

For information on cultural exchange programs, type EXCHANGE

If you want to study in the U.S., type STUDENT

For information for "J" visa waivers, type 212eWAIVER

For information on renewing E, H, I, L, O, or P visas in the U.S, type REVALIDATION

For information on traveling abroad (i.e., outside the U.S.), type FOREIGN

If you want to live permanently in the U.S., type IMMIGRATE

For information on marrying an alien, type MARRIAGE

For information about adopting a foreign child, type ADOPTION

If you have a question about a specific visa case at a particular post, type one of the following:

REGION:AFRICA
REGION:SOUTH ASIA
REGION:EUROPE
REGION:CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA
REGION:CANADA
REGION:NEAR EAST

NOTE: Be sure to include any case specific inquiry includes the full name of the applicant, his/her date and place of birth, date of application, location of the Foreign Service post concerned, and the visa case number.

Contact Information

Main address:

U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Main Switchboard:

202-647-4000
TTY:
1-800-877-8339 (Federal Relay Service)

Hotline for American Travelers:

202-647-5225

Public Communication Division:

PA/PL, Rm. 2206
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520
202-647-6575

United States Postal Service

The U.S. Postal Service is reconnecting displaced and evacuated Hurricane Katrina victims with their mail. Hurricane victims in areas without telephone service or internet access should go to the nearest post office, complete a change-of-address form, and submit it to a postal retail associate at the counter or mail it. For more information call 1-800-ASK-USPS (1-800-275-8777).

We are asking that all people who are registered and have been housed in shelters use the Shelter Address listed as their Current Mailing Address. This is extremely important for tracking and providing assistance to sheltered applicants.

Veterans Administration

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

ATLANTA – VA medical centers in the states of Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina (known as the VA Southeast Network) have established a toll-free number to assist Gulf Coast veterans and their families, as well as the Department of Veterans Affairs employees in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Individuals needing assistance can contact the VA Hurricane Assistance Center anytime at **(800) 956-0787**.

VA is reaching out to victims by providing referrals for health care, shelter and other personal needs to veterans, employees and their families during this difficult time.

Veterans and Families Questions & Answers

Question	Answer
How do I find out about the condition of a family member who is a patient at a VA medical center in the affected area?	At this time, that information is not available. Please be assured, however, that we are taking the best possible care of our patients, even at this difficult time.
I need to contact a family member who works at a VA medical center in the affected area. How can I do so?	<i>Unfortunately, we do not have any available methods to assist you if you need to contact an individual employee at this time. Our best suggestion is that you use any communications methods at your own disposal. All VHA employees who were working at all our facilities at the time of the hurricane are currently safe and well.</i>
What is the current status of VA Medical Centers (VAMCs) in areas affected by Hurricane Katrina?	<i>The New Orleans VAMC has lost power, and patients are being evacuated to VAMCs in Houston, Jackson, Shreveport and Alexandria, LA. The Medical Center's Staff will be evacuated once the patients have been evacuated.</i> <i>The Biloxi VAMC is open, but it sustained significant damage from downed trees and broken windows..</i> <i>The Gulfport VAMC is completely closed. All patients have been evacuated.</i>
What is the status of VA outpatient clinics in the hurricane area?	<i>All VA clinics along the Gulf coast, from Louisiana to Florida, are closed. Information about backup clinics will be released soon.</i>
Will mobile clinics be available for veterans?	<i>The first mobile facilities will be delivered September 1 to the Biloxi VAMC.</i>

<p>I am a VA patient. I need a prescription refilled. What should I do?</p>	<p><i>Call the nearest open VA medical center, tell them your prescription needs and explain that you are unable to get a refill prescription because of the hurricane. You also call, toll free, 1-800-507-4571 for assistance with your prescription. Also, in order to receive care, you will need to register at the new VAMC. You also need to inform the VA medical center and the post office of your new or temporary address.</i></p>
<p>What if I ordered a prescription, but the post office can't deliver it because my home is damaged.</p>	<p><i>Contact the nearest open post office with your forwarding address. Local post offices are holding packages for up to 14 days for addresses affected by the hurricane.</i></p> <p><i>Also, inform both the nearest open post office and nearest open VAMC of your new or temporary address.</i></p>
<p>Are drugs that I had with me during the flood safe to use?</p>	<p><i>Discard drugs - even those in their original containers - if they came in contact with flood or contaminated water. Contamination may lead to diseases that can cause serious health effects.</i></p>
<p>I am a veteran who experienced the trauma of Hurricane Katrina. I am shaken by the loss and devastation and would like to talk with someone about dealing with this event. Where can I call for help?</p>	<p><i>Call the nearest open VA medical center. Counselors are available to help you through the trauma.</i></p>
<p>Who can I contact about my VA benefits?</p>	<p><i>Call 1-800-827-1000 or visit any VA regional office in the country. Information is also available at www.vba.va.gov.</i></p>
<p>How will I get my VA benefit payments?</p>	<p><i>If you currently receive benefit payments from the Department of Veterans Affairs via electronic funds transfer (electronic deposit), payment will be made to your financial institution as usual. If you normally receive a paper check, or if you do not have access to your financial institution, you can obtain a paper convenience check by calling 1-800-827-1000, or by visiting any VA Regional Office in the country.</i></p>
<p>I'm attending to school in the area affected by the hurricane. Who should I contact about my education benefits?</p>	<p><i>Call 1-888-GIBILL1 (888-442-4551) for answers to your questions. You can also obtain information on the web at www.gibill.va.gov.</i></p>
<p>I am currently participating in VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program and have questions about my benefits. Who do I contact?</p>	<p><i>VR&E participants in Louisiana can contact the VA Regional Office in Little Rock at (501) 370-3780 with benefit questions.</i></p>

Misc. Contact Numbers:

Customs & Border Protection – 1-800-BE-ALERT

Federal Aviation Administration – 1-866-TELL-FAA (1-866-835-5322)

Department of Homeland Security – 202-282-8495 (comment line)

South Carolina's Elected Officials -

Office of the Governor Mark Sanford – 1-803-734-2100

Office of Senator Jim DeMint – 1-202-224-6121

Office of Senator Lindsey Graham – 1-202-224-5972

Office of Congressman Henry Brown – 1-202-225-3176

Office of Congressman Joe Wilson – 1-202-225-2452

Office of Congressman Gresham Barrett – 1-202-225-5301

Office of Congressman Bob Inglis – 1-202-225-6030

Office of Congressman John Spratt – 1-202-225-5501

Office of Congressman Jim Clyburn – 1-202-225-3315